

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, October 27. 1709.

I Have trac'd *Famine* thro' all the Nations of *Europe*, except the *North*; and if the War in the *North* break out, as we have Reason to fear it shall, let them not expect to be free of it long.

I come next to the blackest Part of my Text—that fills all *Europe* at this Time with Trembling and Terror, I mean, the **PLAGUE** — It cannot be just to confine Providence to Circumstances, and therefore I will not be peremptory in the determining *Plague* to follow *Famine*; but I shall prove 'tis frequently so, and 'tis very rational to expect it.

The immediate Consequence of Want of Food is, That the poor, miserable, starv'd People, driven by their Hunger in their Ex-

tremities, feed upon all Kinds of corrupt, nauseous, and unwholesome Things—— And this more or less, as the Extremities they are driven to, are greater or less, even to the Eating Carcasses of Beasts dead by unwholesome Diseases, Horses, Leather, Dogs, and Cats——All Kind of Carrion, Weeds, Roots, and at last to eating one another. The natural Consequences of this Kind of Food have always been Diseases, reigning Fluxes, Surfeits, Gripes, Calentures, and at last **FEVERS**, which, encreasing with the Cause, grow pestilential and contagious; and thus came *Plagues* and *Infection*——which immediately spread themselves into other Parts, by the Intervention of Armies or Commerce; and

and so Countries come to be visited with the Plague, that had no Share of the Famine that was the Cause of it.

Thus the last Plague that rag'd in Scotland, which is now about 62 Years ago, for they had not the Plague in 1665, as England had, was brought to them from *Danishick*, the very Place now visited; and on this Account are our Fears and Cautions, as to Ships coming from the *Baltick*, doubly justify'd; and indeed we cannot be too careful in such a Case.

But to give some Examples of what I am saying, That Famine is generally the Original of these Plagues; We may begin at Germany, when the great Wars in the Time of *Gustavus Adolphus* had so wasted Germany, that Famine rag'd in every Part, and miserable Women were reduc'd to the Extremity of Eating their own Children; of which the Histories of that Time are full of Examples—— The PLAGUE was the immediate Consequence, and in its Turn, following the Armies, made dreadful Havock in *Bohemia*, *Saxony*, *Silesia*, and *Austria*. To come nearer; In *Ireland*, *London-Derry* is another Instance; the Famine immediately threw the People there into Diseases; and in Scotland the Want there, which I have mention'd already, and the unwholesome Food, the poor People were oblig'd to eat, threw them into Fluxes and Fevers, that carry'd away a great many Thousands the Year after the Years of Famine—— And indeed these particular Times may be call'd Times of PLAGUE—— But if we had Eyes to look into our own Circumstances, I could tell you, that the Plague, abstractly so call'd, has visited our Fellow-Subjects even of this Island, tho' not in this Island; and this is in those of us, that have gone abroad into our *West-Indies* or *American Colonies*, particularly at *Jamaica*, immediately after the Earthquake, where many Thousands dy'd of the PLAGUE; and more particularly among the Ships and the Troops that we sent thither, where whole Regiments have been swept away, very few excepted, and the Ships so stript of their Men, that it has been found difficult to get Men to bring them home; *Barbadoes* and *Antigua* have had a Share in the

Disaster, and great Numbers have dy'd in our Colonies on the Continent, particularly at *New York*.

I need say little of *France*; the Numbers that have dy'd, tho' not immediately of the Plague, yet of Diseases occasion'd by ill Diet and Want, are bid from us; and what is yet to come, we cannot determine—— But in the North we have now a terrible Example of what I am saying—— It is hard to say directly where this PLAGUE began—— but the first Place we heard of it, I mean fix'd as a Capital Contagion, was at *Warsaw*, immediately after the *Muscovite* Troops had ravag'd the Provinces round it—— And as this was a large City, it was almost depopulated by it, 17000 People dying in that one City in five Months; from hence it spread over most of the Cities of *Poland*, and has at last fix'd on the Shoars of the *Baltick*; from whence by Commerce it is not improbable, it shall be convey'd to other Parts of Europe.

I cannot refrain, before I go on with my Remarks on this sad Subject, to note here, what Cause we have, and how much it is the Concern of this Part of Europe to prevent the breaking out of a War among the Northern Princes at this Time. It is evident, the Armies on every side are not clear of the Plague; the *Swedes*, *Poles*, and *Prussians* especially; and if these infected Armies come to traverse the respective Countries on either side, let any One consider, how it is possible to prevent the spreading of the Contagion—— We are told already, it is spread from *Danishick* to several Cities on that Coast; and if Armies come to make Eruptions, they can never escape carrying the Infection along with them.

It is not altogether without Cause that we have us'd the utmost Precaution in this Island as before, and I wish, the People would think of some other Means of averting such a terrible Judgment, I mean, a-la-mode the *Ninevites*—— I know that is a Subject I must touch nicely, nor does it belong to me to preach of such Things, they say. But what think you of an eminent Physician among us, who has a Name—— and who, if he does not think fit to alter his

his Way of talking in such Cases, shall read his own Name to the Story very quickly, *who having reported that the Plague was come over by the Dantick Ships, and was actually begun in Kent, tho' by the way, the Fact is false*; And then we Physicians, says he, *shall have fine SPORT*. Hellish Wretch! canst thou sport with the Eternal Vengeance? Remember, that in our Accounts from *Dantick* it is said, the Physicians and Surgeons appointed by the Magistrates to tend the poor Sick, were all Dead—— I am no Prophet, or the Son of a Prophet, but I am strangely press'd in my Mind, *tho' without an Agitation*, at the writing this, to tell that Person, and I know he will read it, That if the Plague does come into *England* this time, he shall be the first Physician that shall die of it—— And let him be assur'd, due Notice will be taken of it, in order to honour Divine Justice by the Observation.

I am not prophesying Plagues to *England*, we have National Plagues sufficient upon us; such as a terrible War, an excessive Dearth of Provisions——an impoverished Nation, and a divided Spirit—— I am however in Hopes, and indeed am perswaded, G O D will not at this time visit this Nation with the destroying Angel—— But to put us in mind of the Danger, and to provoke our Sympathy with our afflicted Neighbours, I am perswaded, some shall be touch'd with it, and I believe, have been already, even within my own Knowledge, tho' without Infection.

But if in Human Prudence ye would keep the Plague out of the *South*, you must keep the War out of the *North*—— If not, it is next to impossible it can be prevented; for Nations to go to War with the Plague upon them, it is something like the two Murderers that were hang'd at *Temple-Bar*, who fell out and quarrell'd to that Height, *about who or who was the Cause of their End*, that they kick'd at one another when they were ty'd up to the Gibbet, and just going to be turn'd off into Eternity—— To have two Armies engage with the Plague raging among them, is a most preposterous Scene to look at—— Let such have Patience, Death will

soon reduce them both; and the Terror of the Almighty's Quarrel at them both, might, one would think, put an End to their private Quarrels, and reconcile them all!

But such is the furious Nature of the *Man-Brutes* we speak of, that as if *Plague*, which can depopulate great Cities, and ruin Nations——were not swift enough in Destruction, they will kick at one another with the Rope about their Necks——and mingle Blood with the pale Terrors of a devouring Pestilence!

This indeed is a strong and terrible Argument to the *Northern* Powers not to break with one another at this time, which if they can prevail with one another to consider, the Judgment may perhaps stop where it now stands; but if they will proceed to Blood and Devastation; if they will mingle Armies, and range over the Countries infected and uninfected, it will be impossible, speaking of second Causes, to prevent the spreading of the Plague, and opening a dreadful Door to it for an Eruption all over *Europe*.

These are the Articles, which I call Probabilities of the Plague spreading over the rest of the Nations—— It is in vain, we put Commerce to a stand, and keep the Ships coming from the *Baltick* to a stand—— All your Quarantines, upon Ships opening and airing the Goods, will be of little Signification; If you can make the War perform a Quarantine, indeed something may be said—— But if the Nations infected fight, they must intermix; it is impossible to prevent it: Even the Prisoners on every side will intermix, and the Contagion must of Course be handed on—— and you must then put a Stop to almost all the Trade of *Europe*, to keep it out from you.

And what if I should attempt to put you in mind now of the Distress of your miserable Neighbours in *Dantick*—— and ask you but two Questions? Has their Misery made you at all thoughtful of your own Danger? — Has their Case been recommended by you to him that can relieve them? — They are Questions too serious for me to push them farther; you may answer them to your selves if you can.

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